



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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MATTHEW S. BIGGS
President

GAY HENSON
Secretary-Treasurer

December 9, 2022

Dear Senator,

As the executive officers of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), a labor union representing upwards of 90,000 workers in the federal, public, and private sectors, we are writing to request that Congress pass legislation before the end of this year to adequately fund and authorize critical government functions and essential services, support economic security for working families, and ensure a strong and competitive economic policy. Further, we ask you to include key priorities for our members and all working Americans in the either an omnibus funding bill, as part of a tax extenders package, or in standalone legislation.

IFPTE members working in the federal government have lived through several government shutdowns in the last 25 years as well as the annual threats of government funding lapses. This dysfunctional approach to the appropriations process has resulted in more than a decade of flat funding, costly interruptions of essential services and government operations, increased costs to taxpayers, reduced military readiness, delayed federal projects and research, and disrupted government contractors' operations. It has also impacted the morale, financial security, and retention rates of the diverse population of federal workers who have chosen a career in the civil service.

With the current continuing resolution (CR) expiring on December 16, we urge you in the strongest terms to support passage of a short-term CR lasting until December 23 so that Congress can prevent a lapse in government funding and pass an FY23 omnibus package before the end of the year. We ask you to work with your colleagues and Appropriations Committee leadership to include the following provisions in a year-end FY23 omnibus appropriations bill:

- **Include a federal employee pay increase pursuant to the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (FEPCA, P.L. 101-509) which for 2023 authorizes an average pay increase of 5.1% (4.1% plus 1% locality pay). At a minimum, Congress should provide the 4.6% average pay increase requested by the Biden Administration.** Federal employee pay currently lags comparable private sector pay by a staggering 22.47%, according to the Federal Salary Council. This has significantly harmed federal agencies' recruitment and retention efforts, employee morale, and ensuring institutional knowledge and expertise.
- **Support for good governance and anti-corruption language that prevents the politicization of competitive service positions.** We request language similar to Section 752 of the Senate Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act for FY23 (S. 4685) that would curtail the ability of any presidential administration to harm the federal civil service by unilaterally moving large numbers of competitive service positions into the excepted service, a move that would eviscerate the federal government's merit system principals, politicize the federal workforce, and deny federal workers their due process rights.
- **Provide at minimum of \$368 million for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and include report language to support proper staffing at NLRB regional offices and implementation of electronic voting for union representation elections.** Over the last nine years, NLRB funding has been frozen at \$274 million, leaving the agency with a budget that is 25% smaller when adjusted for inflation than in 2010, and a staff that today is 37% smaller than in 2015. At a time when union representation petitions and unfair labor practice complaints are increasing and working Americans are exercising their democratic rights to form and join unions, the NLRB is

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considering furloughing staff due to years of woefully inadequate budgets. Congress must restore the NLRB's ability to function and enforce federal labor law.

- **Enact the Social Security Administration's (SSA) limitation on administrative expenses at \$16.5 billion or at level no less than the requested \$14.8 billion in the President's FY2023 budget.** From 2010 to 2021, SSA's operating budget declined by about 13% after inflation, while the number of beneficiaries rose by 21%. Years of underfunding has led to staffing shortages which in turn are resulting in a growing backlog of disability claims and putting pressure on SSA to provide necessary services and benefits that retired Americans, disabled workers, and families depend on. These benefits are a pillar of economic security for Americans and Congress must act to adequately fund SSA.
- **Provide at minimum \$31.76 million for the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) as included in the House-passed Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, which is part of the minibuss H.R. 8294.** The 2022 FLRA enacted budget was lower than it was its 2002 budget in absolute terms and is a 41% decrease when adjusted for inflation. Providing the FLRA with the requested \$4.36 million over the FY2022 enacted level will help support technology investments, allow hiring additional expert staff for more in-person engagements, and allow for improvements to case management efficiency.
- **Support \$1.78 billion for the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy,** as provided in the House-passed Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, H.R. 8294. This language will fund R&D activities for advanced reactor projects and domestic fuel sources, help maintain current carbon-free nuclear energy generation, and support waste storage solutions.

Additionally, we request the following legislation and authorizations be passed before the end of the year, either as part of the omnibus bill, in the tax extenders package, or as standalone legislation:

- **Reauthorization of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA),** a worker retraining program for those harmed by our trade policies and unfair trade competition. Since 1962, 5 million American workers have benefited from TAA. Since the program's expiration in June 2022, over 30,000 eligible workers have lost access to two years of retraining and income support.
- **Enact the Tax Fairness for Workers Act (S. 1157/H.R. 2549),** which restores and improves the tax deduction for union dues that were eliminated in the 2017 tax law.
- **Enact the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (H.R. 1065/S. 4431), which was passed by the House with overwhelming bipartisan support.** This bill prohibits employers from discriminating against workers affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.
- **Reinstate the expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC),** which would make enormous strides toward supporting job creation, offsetting inflation, ending child hunger and food insecurity, and lifting the working poor out of poverty.
- **Enact the VA Employee Fairness Act (H.R. 1948/S. 771) and the Rights for the TSA Workforce Act (H.R. 903/S. 1856),** bipartisan bills that provide, respectively, collective bargaining rights to health care professionals at the VA and TSA employees.

Thank you for considering our requests. Your work to provide proper government funding for FY 2023 is critical to making sure our economy works for working people and Americans throughout our nation. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact IFPTE Legislative Director Faraz Khan at (202) 239-4892.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Biggs
IFPTE President



Gay Henson
IFPTE Secretary-Treasurer